Global Accessibility Awareness Day – Playing Halo 5: Guardians Without Sight

Community Mister Taxel May 21, 2020

It’s Global Accessibility Awareness Day!

With that in mind, we’d like to share some highlights from an awesome accessibility-oriented livestream SightlessKombat hosted recently on the Xbox Ambassadors Mixer Channel. We gathered a group of players to show off an awesome community-created map mode set in Halo 5: Guardians that was designed to be played entirely without sight. If you’re not familiar with SightlessKombat, he’s a gamer without sight, accessibility consultant, and Xbox Ambassador, who is constantly pushing the gaming industry to create better experiences for everyone. He also happens to be an Xbox Ambassador of the Month, and one of the newest community hosts on the Xbox Ambassadors Mixer Channel!

Playing Halo 5: Guardians Without Sight

If you’ve ever played a first-person shooter without sight, you might have experienced some difficulty with various aspects of FPS gameplay. This can be addressed through a variety of accessibility features, and SightlessKombat has a deep understanding of how those features can be designed and used. Halo’s in-game feature, Forge, gives players the opportunity to customize, save, and share Halo maps and modes for custom games. Teaming up with a variety of other community members, play-testers, and co-forgers, SightlessKombat helped design a custom map and

mode set that was created in Forge to be played completely without sight. Some of the other contributors include spartan blood 1, Kawecki 22, and b0b is here.

The Map:

Medusa is an accessible map and mode set that was designed by SightlessKombat and a variety of others to be played without sight. This map combines a geometric layout with sound cues that are specific to certain items and locations. Through the sound cues, players can hear where they are on the map, which direction other players might be, the location of power weapons or the Oddball, and when their weapon is aimed at an enemy.

The Rules:

1. Everybody plays Medusa without sight regardless of their level of vision.
2. No using the right analog stick to change the direction you're aiming.
3. Additional rules may apply depending on how competitive you want to be (for example: no spamming the gravity hammer or no standing with your back to a wall/corner).

The Highlights

This is an awesome story about members of the Xbox community using the tools at their disposal to create something more accessible than what previously existed. The Medusa map and mode set are accessible, creative, and a ton of fun to play on. Check out the highlights of our Medusa session in the video below:

An audio descriptive version of the video can be found at this link.

And the Original Video can be Viewed through This Text Here - Sol :3

Reflecting on the Medusa Experience

For the stream, we had a party that included two gamers without sight as well as several gamers who are sighted, including myself, but chose to blindfold themselves for the purpose of this stream. This was a great opportunity for me to better experience what it can be like to play games without sight, and forced me to rely on my sense of hearing above all else. While SightlessKombat really dominated the competitive aspect of our time playing together, everyone involved had a great time playing Halo 5 Guardians.

By the end of the stream, I felt myself getting much better at navigating the map, finding and avoiding enemies, and competing in general – all without using the sense I personally rely on the most when playing FPS games. I think experiences like this can be really impactful in helping gamers with sight to start thinking about game and sound design with an accessibility-first mindset, and I hope that this blog and video are helpful in that regard.

Where to learn more

If you're interested in learning more about gaming without sight, Halo 5 Medusa, or just getting to know SightlessKombat better, you'll find some helpful links below:

- Xbox Ambassadors Mixer Channel
- SightlessKombat Ambassador of the Month Blog
- SightlessKombat YouTube Channel
- SightlessKombat Medusa Map Walkthrough Video
- SightlessKombat Mixer Channel
- SightlessKombat Website
- Medusa Slayer Map Linked Here
- Medusa Oddball Map Linked Here

Want to share your story?

We're really excited to be celebrating Global Accessibility Awareness Day in this way, and we recognize that celebrating achievements around accessibility in gaming doesn't start or end on May 21st. Do you have an inspiring, uplifting, or otherwise interesting story that you'd care to share with our team? Submit your story at this link, and we may publish it!